

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Puerto Rico

Profile of Drug Indicators

March 2003



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Puerto Rico

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics

- Population: 3,957,988 (July 2002 estimate)¹; 3,808,610 (2000 Census)²
- Race/ethnicity (2000 Census): 0.9% white; 0.1% black/African American; 0.0% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0.1% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.0% other; 0.1% two or more races; 98.8% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)³

Politics

- Governor: Sila Maria Carderón⁴
- U.S. House of Representatives Member: Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá⁵
- Puerto Rico Senate Members (District): Margarita Ostolaza Bey (1); Jose A. Ortiz-Daliot (1); Magdalia Padilla (2); Pablo Lafontaine (2); Rafael Rodriguez Vargas (3); Julio Rodriguez Gomez (3); Jorge A. Ramos Velez (4); Rafael Irizarry (4); Modesto Agosto Alicea (5); Bruno A. Ramos Olivero (5); Cirilo Tirado, Hijo (6); Angel Rodriguez Otero (6); Jose L. Dalmau (7); Sixto Hernandez (7); Yasmin Mejias (8); Juan A. Cancel Alegria (8)⁶
- Governor's Office on Drug Control Director: Osvaldo Rivera Cianchini⁷
- Capital: San Juan⁸

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁹
Designated in 1994, the Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands HIDTA is responsible for the islands of Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra, St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John.

Federal Funding

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program¹⁰
Since FY 1998 when funding was first available through the Drug-Free Communities Support Program, only one coalition in Puerto Rico has received funding. In FY 1999, \$100,000 was awarded to the Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services Administration, San Juan.
- Executive Office for Weed and Seed¹¹
Aguadilla is the only site in Puerto Rico that has received Federal funding and been designated a Weed and Seed site.
- FY 2001/2002 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Formula and Discretionary Grant summary for Puerto Rico:¹²
 - Formula Funding: \$28,087,119
 - Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant - \$21,574,569
 - Community Mental Health Services Block Grant - \$5,391,964
 - Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) - \$455,000
 - Protection and Advocacy Formula Grant - \$665,586
 - Discretionary Funding: \$4,680,717
 - Mental Health - \$50,000

- Substance Prevention - \$3,122,503
- Substance Abuse Treatment - \$1,508,214
- Total Mental Health Funds: \$6,562,550
- Total Substance Abuse Funds: \$26,205,286
- Total Funds for Puerto Rico: \$32,767,836
- FY 1998-2002 Byrne Formula Grant Program amount awarded to Puerto Rico:¹³
 - FY 1998: \$7,396,435
 - FY 1999: \$7,396,000
 - FY 2000: \$7,193,362
 - FY 2001: \$7,182,369
 - FY 2002: \$6,826,473
- FY 2002 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Grant amount awarded to Puerto Rico: \$6,075 to the Puerto Rico Department of Justice/Drug Court Program Office, San Juan, for drug court enhancement.¹⁴
- FY 1996-2002 Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) for State Prisoners Formula Grant amount allocated to Puerto Rico:¹⁵
 - FY 1996: \$265,753
 - FY 1997: \$287,316
 - FY 1998: \$603,826
 - FY 1999: \$662,664
 - FY 2000: \$708,163
 - FY 2001: \$666,228
 - FY 2002: \$700,082
- There were no Puerto Rico recipients of the FY 2002 Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Methamphetamine Grant.¹⁶
- There were no Puerto Rico recipients of the FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant.¹⁷

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- During 2001, the Crime Index total for Puerto Rico was 70,117.¹⁸

Index of Crime, Puerto Rico, 2000-2001

Type of Offense	2000	2001	% change
Violent crime	12,404	11,403	-8.1%
Property crime	62,973	58,714	-6.8
Murder/non-negligent manslaughter	693	744	+7.4
Forcible rape	228	187	-18.0
Robbery	8,757	7,999	-8.7
Aggravated assault	2,726	2,473	-9.3
Burglary	21,057	19,931	-5.3
Larceny-theft	28,940	26,140	-9.7
Motor vehicle theft	12,976	12,643	-2.6
Crime Index total	75,377	70,117	-7.0

Drugs

- Cocaine
Cocaine prices in Puerto Rico range from \$13,000 to \$18,000 per kilogram. The cost for a rock of crack cocaine is approximately \$5.¹⁹
- Heroin
Heroin sells for \$80,000 to \$100,000 per kilogram in Puerto Rico.²⁰ Purity levels of heroin are high in Puerto Rico.²¹
- Marijuana
The cost for a pound of marijuana ranges in Puerto Rico between \$1,200 and \$1,500.²²

Juveniles

- Approximately 5.6% of Puerto Rico high school students surveyed in 2001 reported being current users of marijuana.²³

Percent of High School Students Reporting Drug Use, by Gender, Puerto Rico, 2001

	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime marijuana use	8.8%	18.0%	13.1%
Current marijuana use	2.9	8.7	5.6
Lifetime cocaine use	2.1	6.8	4.3
Current cocaine use	0.8	3.9	2.2
Lifetime inhalant use	5.9	10.0	7.8
Current inhalant use	2.5	4.3	3.4
Lifetime heroin use	1.6	7.5	4.4
Lifetime methamphetamine use	1.9	7.4	4.5
Lifetime illegal steroid use	2.2	7.4	4.7
Lifetime injecting illegal drug use	0.8	3.6	2.1
Tried marijuana before age 13	1.9	5.7	3.7

- More than 22% of Puerto Rico 12th graders reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetime.²⁴

Percent of High School Students Reporting Drug Use, by Grade, Puerto Rico, 2001

	9th	10th	11th	12th
Lifetime marijuana use	6.5%	11.4%	18.3%	22.2%
Current marijuana use	3.2	4.9	8.2	8.5
Lifetime cocaine use	4.7	3.3	4.4	5.3
Current cocaine use	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.6
Lifetime inhalant use	9.1	6.4	8.1	10.1
Current inhalant use	5.0	2.5	2.4	4.2
Lifetime heroin use	6.7	3.3	2.8	5.1
Lifetime methamphetamine use	6.1	4.3	1.6	6.2
Lifetime illegal steroid use	5.8	4.9	3.2	5.7
Lifetime injection of illegal drug	2.2	2.2	0.8	4.6
Tried marijuana before age 13	4.5	3.7	2.0	4.2

Consequences of Use

- In comparison to the rest of the U.S., Puerto Ricans have a higher incidence of injection-related HIV/AIDS.²⁵

Enforcement

- Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands HIDTA initiatives include the following:²⁶
 - Drug-Related Mass Murders and Homicides/Public Housing Communities: Members of this initiative conduct investigations into drug-related homicide organizations in public housing communities in Puerto Rico.
 - Fajardo Major Organization Investigations: Members of this initiative conduct investigations to dismantle drug trafficking organizations operating in the east coast of Puerto Rico, including offshore municipalities of Vieques and Culebra islands.
 - Puerto Rico Fugitive Task Force: Led by the U.S. Marshals Service, members of this task force arrest criminals associated with smuggling, distribution, money laundering, and street gang drug-related activities throughout the area of responsibility.

Trafficking and Seizures

- Due to its geographic location and association with the U.S., Puerto Rico is a major Caribbean point of entry for large, metric-ton quantities of cocaine destined for the continental United States. Puerto Rico also serves as a transit point for Colombian heroin.²⁷
- Puerto Rico is an attractive sea and air transportation site in the Caribbean because it has one of the busiest seaports in North America and numerous commercial airline flights to the U.S.²⁸
- Since the early 1990s, Puerto Rico has remained the largest hub for cocaine in the Caribbean. Approximately one-third of the cocaine flowing through the Caribbean ends up in Puerto Rico.²⁹
- Traffickers have begun to use Puerto Rico as an alternate transshipment location for European MDMA destined for the U.S.³⁰
- In FY 2002, the U.S. Customs Service (USCS) reported the seizure of nearly 16,000 pounds of cocaine in Puerto Rico.³¹

Amount of Drugs Seized (in Pounds) by USCS, Puerto Rico, FY 1998-2002

Year	Marijuana	Cocaine	Heroin
1998	664	20,673	60
1999	3,442	20,492	31
2000	887	33,867	51
2001	9,992	20,028	139
2002	1,289	15,817	329

- During 2001, nearly 3,000 kilograms of cocaine were seized in Puerto Rico.³²

Amount of Drugs Seized, Puerto Rico, 1994-2001

Year	Cocaine (in kilos)	Marijuana (in kilos)	Heroin (in kilos)	MDMA (in tablets)
1994	15,167	0	n/a	n/a
1995	12,512	0	n/a	n/a
1996	11,072	8,635	n/a	n/a
1997	15,153	1,337	n/a	n/a
1998	10,344	1,285	n/a	n/a
1999	9,977	12,605	n/a	n/a
2000	5,516	1,982	24	n/a
2001	2,831	24	42	1,977

Courts

➤ Drug Courts³³

As of January 2003, there were 9 drug courts in existence or being planned in Puerto Rico. Four drug courts have been in existence for more than two years, 2 were recently implemented, and 3 were being planned.

➤ During FY 2001, 68% of the Federally-sentenced defendants in Puerto Rico had committed drug offenses. Approximately 70% (322 offenses) of the offenses involved powder cocaine.³⁴

Federal Sentencing Statistics, Drug Offenses, Puerto Rico, FY 2001

Drug Type Involved	Offenses	% of Total
Powder cocaine	322	69.5%
Heroin	83	17.9
Crack cocaine	38	8.2
Marijuana	14	3.0
Methamphetamine	0	0.0
Other	6	1.3

Sources

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² U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Puerto Rico Governor Web site: <http://www.fortaleza.gobierno.pr/>

⁵ U.S. House of Representatives Web site: <http://clerk.house.gov/members/index.php>

⁶ Puerto Rico Senate Web site: <http://www.senadoelapr.org/>

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⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, *2002 World Factbook*, Puerto Rico section: <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rq.html>

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The Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-666-3332
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>
ondcp@ncjrs.org

